

REPLACEMENT PARAGRAPHS

[0001] The invention concerns a fixing element for fixing a first bone fragment to a corresponding second bone fragment, as in an ankle joint fracture.

[0007] United States Patent 5,713,904 B1 to Errico, et al. (February 3, 1998), discloses a fixing element of the general kind set forth, in which an integral tubular fixing body is provided at both ends with longitudinal slots so that, upon the insertion of a suitable spreading body into its internal cavity, it is spread open in a cup-shaped configuration at both ends while it remains undeformed in its central region. The fixing body in that case is provided with a male screwthread by which of which it can be screwed into the bore in the bone.

[0038] In addition, at the distal end of the first stage 2.1 the spreading body 2 is of a transverse dimension which in the non-spread condition - as indicated in Figure 3 by the contour 16 shown in dash-dotted line - approximately corresponds to the transverse dimension of the operative surface 15.1 defining the cavity 3, at the proximal end of the first portion 1.1. Furthermore, the longitudinal spacing between the distal end of the first stage 2.1 and the distal end of the second stage 2.2 is less than the longitudinal spacing between the distal end of the second portion 1.2 and the proximal end of the first portion 1.1. That provides that the first part 17 of the first portion 1.1, which is at the proximal end, is spread open before spreading of the second portion 1.2. In other words, the fixing body 1 is already anchored at its proximal end in the first bone fragment 5.1 before anchoring in the second bone fragment 5.2 occurs.

[0039] Due to the irregular spreading effect, the fixing body 1 is reduced in length in its longitudinal direction, as indicated in Figure 3 by the contour 18 shown in dash-double-dotted line. The reduction in length of the second portion 1.2 as a result of its spreading which begins at the distal end is transmitted to the first bone fragment 5.1 by way of the first part 17 of the first portion, which is already spread open, so that the first bone fragment is pressed against the second bone fragment 5.2 in a manner which is advantageous in terms of healing.